

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Annual General Meeting
4th November 2023

Present: 38 members attended the meeting . Hardcopy of names on file

The meeting opened at 2.00pm

1. Welcome by the President

Peter Dyke welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them all for coming.

2. Apologies: Dave Kibble, Peter and Jane Bell, Violet and Richard Delmas, Robin and Pam Hendry, Polly Reynolds, John Malaiperuman, Marcus Evans, Fiona Illing, Steve Durston, Tony Willoghby, Geoff Hughes, Carolyn Waite.

3. Minutes of AGM held on 5th November 2022: Approved and signed as a true and accurate record by Brian Roynon on behalf of Steve.

4. Matters Arising: None

5. Chairman's Annual Report: – read by Brian Roynon, standing in for Steve who was unable to attend due to health reasons.

Good afternoon everybody and thank you for attending our 2023 AGM on this wet/sunny Saturday afternoon.

Again we have had a very interesting year, starting with a very generous donation from Brigit that funded our new summerhouse. Maintenance wise plans are being processed to sort the drive and carpark having had two out of three tenders. Coaching wise, unfortunately we have not had a very good year in regards to new members following on from coaching. We will try to turn this around next year.

I would like to thank Kathy and the coaching team for all their hard work.

On a high note the club teams have done well, but more of that from Marcus in his report.

We also held the Spencer Ell Cup (the third best eight available AC players) which although tying the lawns up for five days brought in valuable funds. It is no small feat to keep the lawns in a condition that attracts events like this.

So I would like to thank John and the team for all the hard work they put in to achieve this, not forgetting the mowers, hoop setters, white liners, those that attend on work mornings and ofcourse the clubhouse. It does not get clean on its own. So a special thanks to Joan for her hard work to keep it clean so the rest of us can enjoy it.

Then there are the cake makers, I could go on, suffice to say thank you to all those that help to make the club as successful as it is.

Shortly there will be a vote for the chairman's position, all I can say is that I feel I have grown into role and I feel that because I play both deciplines and competitions on a regular basis I have been available and approachable for all members to voice their opinions and concerns.

I would like to thank the committee for all past and continuing support. Either way I will support the club to the best of my ability.

Steve Durston. Chairman. 4th November 2023

6. Treasurer's Annual Report 2023

(a) presentation of accounts:

I've produced an Income and Expenditure for the year ending 30 September 2023. This shows a balance at the bank of £31,287.52 to which has to be added £402.30 unbanked cash and is an amount to be carried forward of £31,689.82. The financial records have been produced to Roger Baddeley and he has approved them and annotated the account accordingly.

Ive also prepared a Budget for next year so you should all have the two documents. The budget only refers to regular and recurring transactions and I think gives a more easily understood appreciation of the club's financial position.

I want briefly to refer to some of the totals of income and expenditure for the last year.

Under Income:

Games An amount of £1228.40 from the Bridge club , up from£408.00 ;last year and , after subscriptions, the largest reliable single contribution to the club's income.

Raffles and donations. The majority of this is a one off gift to the club from Brigit Clayton towards. the cost of the new summer house. This donation followed on the club's registration as a CASC. This means that for every £1 donated by a tax payer the club is able to claim 25p from the gov't. In Brigit's case £1500 thus became £1875 and went a long way towards the total cost of the project. In appreciation of this the summer house is now know as..... the summer house.

Tournament lunches. This is a large amount and netted the club just short of £800 from the 2 tournaments where food was provided. The majority was due to the 5 day Spencer Ells and will not be repeated at least for some years.

Corporate lawn hire/ visitors. £185 is from individual visitors and £240 from a single evening visit of the Clevedon 41 club, as a return on time invested this latter was quite eye watering.

SW/CA Lawn Hire. This is larger than it should be because it contains a previous years payment from SWF for the Short Croquet Tournament. What it doesn't contain is the payment for the Spencer Ells some £800 which will fall into next years receipts

Subscriptions. Down slightly on the previous year despite a small increase of £5 in the annual subscription.

Under expenditure:

Miscellaneous. An Auditor always hates to see anything labelled as miscellaneous but this refers , in the main, to Brigit's original cheque which was returned to her, out of an abundance of caution pending our registration as a CASC. This is balanced by a similar entry under |Income.

Grounds / Pavilion. £6500 this lumps together the purchase and installation of the summer house and base, the concrete plinth for the water tank which is due to arrive early next week and the annual hedge trim.

Machinery maintenance. This is mainly keeping cylinders and bed knives sharpened and adjusted. The lawns are extremely abrasive and blunt the cutting mechanisms We are applying a treatment to the lawns in the hope of reducing the worm casts which seem to be the problem. It will take a few months before the outcome becomes apparent. You can all be assured that the treatment we are using is not poisonous to the worms but is merely a deterrent.

Now I'd like to turn to the Budget for next year.

Of the seemingly healthy balance b/fwd of £31,600.00 its worth reiterating that almost £26,000.00 is comprised of local and central gov't grants received since 2017. Without these we would have a bank balance of about £5,500.00.

Two items of expenditure are earmarked for this year. £5300 for the irrigation system and £11,000.00 for replacement of the track from Avening Close across the green space to the club gate. You'll all be aware of the state of the car park having just walk across it. This will be a major expense and something which may require a separate fund raising effort

Ive estimated subscriptions for next year at £11,000 this is about. about 80% of the recurring expenditure. We rely on the extra income from all the activities and work undertaken by members to make the club viable. We are a Community Amateur Sports Club . Within the foreseeable future, whatever the annual subscription, the number of members and the number of tournaments we hold we shall continue to rely on volunteers to do all the work. But I do want to emphasise that although there may be a hope that members will volunteer there is no requirement or even a high expectation that they will do so

We all have interests outside croquet. Some have children, spouses parents.. It would be a shame to lose members because they felt uncomfortable about being unable to give more time to the club.

There is of course a corollary to this the club relies exclusively on volunteers and they should be given a little slack. If the leaves aren't always cleared away, the lawns not cut ,the lines a bit wobbly this might just mean that on a particular occasion somebody had something more important to do.

The time long foreshadowed by previous addresses by successive Chairs and Treasurers has now finally come about. Geoff Hughes has retired from maintaining the machinery and John Wallace has stepped down as Lawns Manager . Now its a truism that nobody is indispensable but its equally true that some are less dispensable than others. But if you look at the budget for next year its absolutely clear that any thought of contracting out lawn care or bringing in hired help is not an option. What has to be done will continue to be found from within the membership

The next item on the agenda is the setting of the annual subscription. We are proposing a rise but if paid before the 31 December this will be £10 for a full member an increase of under 6%

David Hunt – Treasurer - 4th November 2023

Linda enquired about the use of a electronic card machine – this has been discussed in June and July committee meetings, but no decision has been made.

Questions about the cost of the track and carpark were raised by members. It was agreed that the committee should approach the Council to ask who had liability for the track. The present track is 13yrs old and was put in place on request from the Council.

(b) setting of subscriptions: The proposal by the committee is that the subscription should rise to £200, discounted to £180 if paid by 31st December 2023. (Different memberships paid at the fixed pro rata rate.)

Andrew then proposed that to be realistic it should be set higher at £220, seconded by Sandra. This was not passed by the members.

£200 Proposed by David, seconded by Tony Hinchliffe was then voted on and passed by the members.

(c) appointment of honorary auditor: Roger Baddeley has agreed to act again as Auditor

Proposed by Graham and seconded by David

7. League Secretary's report: - read by Erica

The club had another good season across the various SWF competitions. First and foremost, congratulations to the B League and Short Croquet teams who won their respective competitions. Nailsea teams also won Division One at both the Spring and Autumn Short Croquet competitions

held at Nailsea and Budleigh Salterton - well done to all involved. Honourable mentions go to the Parkstone Trophy and Golf Croquet Level Play Division One teams for finishing as runners-up, both by the narrowest of margins.

For next season, I have had a request to reduce the number of Nailsea teams in the Advanced League from 3 to 2, due to player availability. I would also welcome any interest from anyone with an Association Croquet handicap of 16-24 to see if we can defend our B League title, as 2 members of that team are no longer eligible. In Golf Croquet, I propose moving one of our entries in the Level Play League to the Level Play 5+ League, which should result in more enjoyable games for that team, though I thought their performances last season against strong opposition were admirable. In addition, if anyone with a Golf Croquet handicap of 8 or above would like to play for a team in the Golf Croquet High Handicap League, please let me know. Otherwise I plan to make the same entries as the 2023 season.

In the junior section, we have had a total of 6 members attending regularly in 2023. Many thanks to Erica, Doreen, James, and everyone else who has assisted me with this and ensured we always have at least 2 adults on the premises during junior sessions. As most of the sessions later in the season were only attended by the younger juniors, the Association Croquet competition wasn't contested this year, but Joel Wallace was the winner of the One-Ball, Golf Croquet, and Pirates competitions, while Luke Mair was runner-up in the One-Ball. In the "Junior Junior Pirates" competition, Sebastian Pittaway was the winner and Alex Evans the runner-up, with all the above receiving club trophies.

Marcus Evans - 4th November 2023

8. Constitutional Change: No changes to the constitution have been proposed

9. Election of the Committee:

The committee received two nominations for Chairman. Steve Durston and John Hancock. A secret ballot on paper was made and counted. Steve Durston received the majority number of votes and was duly elected as Chairman.

The following members were proposed and seconded 3 weeks before the AGM ..

David Hunt was unanimously voted in as Treasurer

Erica Malaiperuman was voted in as Secretary

A further four members of the committee were voted in unanimously.

Andrew Wimshurst, Brian Roynon, Sandra Morgan, and Paul Arbos.

10. Safeguarding.

Linda read out the following report

Safeguarding Report to NDCC AGM November 2023

The present

This year the club has failed to adequately implement Safeguarding procedures. While the juniors' coaching has taken place with the lead coach having full DBS clearance, the necessary permissions and information has not been obtained from the parents / guardians of the young people.

This is despite repeated calls from me for the information and is one of the reasons I have given notice that I will stand down from the role and this took effect at the end of the season. It is the committee's responsibility to either find someone else to take it on, or to fulfil the responsibilities themselves.

I shall be handing over all the relevant paperwork and records and am happy to provide a level of support to my successor.

The future

The other reason I stood down is how I think the role will be developing next year and into the future.

The Local Safeguarding Officer (LSO) role originally related to people under the age of 18 but has been broadened to include Vulnerable Adults – a group clearly defined in legislation.

Currently the Croquet Association (CA), - shortly to become Croquet England (CqE) – is planning to further extend the responsibilities of the role which will be renamed (as I understand it) Local Welfare Officer (LWO).

Full information has not yet been provided by the CA but from what I have seen it appears to be going down a much more 'pastoral care' route, in addition to the legal requirements. I am not in a position to undertake this, as I am far less involved with the club than in previous years and it is not a role I would want to undertake anyway.

I urge the Committee to keep an eye on this situation.

The South West Federation of Croquet Clubs is monitoring these developments and looks forward to a dialogue with clubs about how these might be implemented.

Linda Shaw
LSO

The Chairman acknowledged Linda's hard work during the last few years and agreed to 'keep and eye on' the situation.

At present Erica has taken on the role of LSO. It will be advertised as a vacancy for the next season.

A.O.B.

Roger Baddeley raised two questions for the meeting.

1. I understand there are a number of positions currently vacant (e.g. recruitment, coaching & retention, safeguarding). Can the committee please outline the process that will be

followed to fill these positions and the target timescales.

A discussion followed. The outcome was that members should be made aware of the ethos of the club, (that is that volunteers run the club themselves apart from major groundwork,) at the point of joining; that better communication from the committee was required in the future to explain what kind of help is needed to run the club efficiently. A suggestion was made that the roles that are now carried out by members should be listed and details given. Vacancies are usually filled at the end of the season when the 'posts' become vacant.

Regarding coaching/ tasters, it was decided in the committee(minutes August) that a meeting to decide on strategies would take place in the New Year.

The secretary tries to keep the Croquet Club handbook (in the clubhouse) up to date with who is responsible for which area. Contact details are provided so that anyone with questions may approach the member in question.

2. This season there were a number of tournaments which limited the lawn availability for most members of the club. Is the intention to continue to host tournaments as a way of revenue generation or was this season exceptional?

Graham pointed out that there were many slots on the booking sheet that were free during the season even without double banking. David Hogg, whose house overlooks the lawns, explained that during the weekends, except when there were league matches it was very rare to see players on the lawns.

The committee explained that every year a bid is made for a CA/CE tournament, with GC and AC switching each alternative year. It is unlikely that a bid would be made for a five day tournament again. The number of tournaments which were hosted this year was not exceptional. The revenue is important for the club as is being able to watch highly ranked players. The croquet community needs clubs like Nailsea to hold events. Each year a calendar of events is prepared (in the past by Peter and recently by Kathy) for members to read. It is displayed in the clubhouse.

The meeting closed at 3.30

D.O.N.M. 2nd November 2024